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THE SOUTHERN PLANTER;

Devoted to Agriculture, Horticulture, and the Household Arts.

Agriculture is the nursing mother of the Arts.
Xenophon.

Tillage and Pasturage are the two breasts of the State.—*Sully.*

C. T. BOTTS & L. M. BURFOOT, Editors.

VOL. II.

RICHMOND, AUGUST, 1842.

No. 8.

For the Southern Planter.

FOREST TREES.

Messrs. Editors,—I have compiled for the Planter the following list of the principal trees which are to be found in that part of Virginia which lies immediately at the head of tide water, giving the botanical name of each in addition to that by which it is commonly known, and making such remarks about the soil, and use of many, as I have deemed pertinent. The difference between many of the varieties of the same tree are almost entirely botanical, and consequently but little known. The pine is a remarkable instance of this great similarity, and I have known a person who was particularly observant of every thing that concerned timber and timber trees, who insisted that the old field pine was exactly the same tree with the yellow or heart pine, and that when time had thinned out these piny groves the trees would assume the stately form of what we call the sap pine, and would then by degrees be transmuted into a heart tree. Yet, because one has two leaves and the other three contained in a sheath, the botanists tell us that one is the *pinus resinosa*, the other the *pinus taeda*, and of course we, regarding science, must adopt their view of the subject. As to the probable value that your readers may place on this communication you are the best judge, therefore, I place it entirely at your disposal.

1. The white oak, *quercus alba*, is found very generally through the forest without much regard to the nature of the soil, except, however, that it rarely grows on land that is very gravelly. It is far more valuable for timber than any tree which we possess.

2. The red oak, *quercus rubra*, is a large tree, prefers a rather sandy or gravelly soil, and is by no means so valuable as the preceding.

3. The scarlet oak, *quercus coccinea*, is very similar to the red oak and is generally confounded with it. Beside several slight botanical differences, it produces a vast number of ink-balls and in autumn the leaves assume a bright scarlet hue.

4. The black oak, *quercus tinctora*, is general in the forest. I do not believe that any great value can be attached to it as timber.

5. Spanish oak, *quercus falcata*, grows on gravelly forest land, and is of little value as timber, being generally much wind-shaken.

6. Willow oak, *quercus phellos*, is a beautiful tree which delights in a low moist soil and is much esteemed by wheelwrights for its wood.

7. The *quercus humilis* is a dwarf variety of the willow oak.

8. Post oak, *quercus obtusiloba*, is found in the forest, generally, but I think prefers a rather gravelly soil. As its name denotes, it is valuable for posts, stakes for fences, &c.

9. Overcup oak, *quercus macrocarpa*, is to be found on the banks of the rivers, but is not common. It is a most splendid tree, and reaches a very great size, being the largest of the species.

10. Chesnut oak, *quercus montana*, is of little value for timber.

11. Black jack, *quercus nigra*, with us grows in barren slashy land. It is very sectional, (if I may use the expression) being found but rarely in some parts of the country, whilst in others it abounds—is a mark of poor land.

12. Scrub oak, *quercus catesbaei*, generally puts up where the woods have suffered greatly from fire.

13. Shrub oak, *quercus ilicifolia*, which differs considerably in appearance from the last, brings to a conclusion the list of oaks with which I am acquainted. If there are any more amongst us, they differ so slightly from some of these varieties that it would require the closest observation to discover them.

14. The yellow pine, *pinus resinosa*, is to be found scattered everywhere through our forests. It attains great size, and is of great value for plank and other kinds of timber.

15. White spruce pine, *pinus alba*, is not abundant in this section of the country. Where it is plentiful it is very much esteemed for making charcoal.

16. Hemlock tree, *pinus canadensis*, when seen here is found growing on the river cliffs. It is frequently, indeed commonly, but improperly called the yew.

17. Old field or loblolly pine, *pinus taeda*,

18. Grey or scrub pine, *pinus banksiana*,

19. Broom pine, *pinus palustris*, are all three known under the general name *old field pine*, and are of very little value.

20. White heart hickory, *carya tomentosa*, is, I think, the most valuable of the race of hickories, on account of its great toughness. It prospers best in rich alluvial soils, but grows very well throughout the forest.

21. Shagbark hickory, *carya alba*, is a large tree—is quite valuable and very common in our forests.

22. Bitter nut, *carya amara*, is especially remarkable for its fruit, which has the thinnest imaginable shell which is filled with a kernel of the most tempting appearance but so bitter that it is utterly impossible to eat it.

23. Pig nut, *carya porcina*, is very common in our forests.

24. Shell bark hickory, *carya sulcata*. Although this tree is indigenous to this part of the State, yet it is so very rare that I have never met with a single specimen. From the description that I have received of it I think that it is very much like the *carya amara*, but its nut is a delightful one. Hickory is (as every one knows) the best of all fuel.

25. White elm, *ulmus americana*, grows naturally on low and moist lands, but grows very well on high land when it is transplanted. As timber it is very well to use elm for sills that are to be constantly immersed in water; for instance, as facings for mill dams, &c.

26. River elm, *ulmus memorialis*, as its name denotes, is to be found on the banks of small rivers where its spreading and weeping boughs afford a delightful shade to the lounging piscator.

27. Slippery elm, *ulmus fulva*, is by no means as common as the two preceding varieties. It is generally found about the banks of rivers and in uncleared low grounds. It is much esteemed for its mucilaginous inner bark which is considered very efficacious in some affections of the throat and lungs. It may be very easily distinguished by the great similarity of its bark to that of the ash, and by its twigs, which grow in rows on the branches exactly opposite to each other and nearly at right angles from the main branch.

28. Whahoo elm, *ulmus alata*, is chiefly remarkable for the cork-like bark, similar to that on the Dutch elm, with which its branches are winged.

29. Red maple, *acer rubrum*, is a very showy tree, both in the spring when its rich scarlet pendant seed-vessels adorn it and in the autumn when its leaves assume a splendidly brilliant hue.

30. White maple, *acer dasycarpum*, is very highly prized by cabinet-makers—it is susceptible of a very high polish and is a most beautiful wood.

Both of these varieties delight in moist and loamy soils. I have never seen any attempt made to introduce them into pleasure grounds, where they (particularly the first) would be exceedingly ornamental, I have no doubt, however, that it might be done with perfect success.

31. Box elder, *acer negundo*, grows on the banks of the river. Its shape is symmetrical, the foliage dense and of a peculiar and pleasing

hue, a yellowish green. It succeeds very well when it is transplanted and is very ornamental. It attains a tolerably great size, but I rather think that the timber is of no value.

32. Sweet gum, *liquidambar styraciflua*, commonly grows in moist bottoms—it attains great size, but is almost entirely useless both for timber and for fuel.

33. Forest poplar, *linodendron tulipifera*, is one of the most magnificent of trees. Its superb size, its beautifully symmetrical form, its dense, rich and luxuriant foliage and the great beauty of its flowers when it is in bloom should render every one anxious to have it about his house, which he may do with but little care, for though a native of swamps and moist land, it grows perfectly readily on almost any soil to which it may be transplanted. The poplar has not only the recommendation of being beautiful but it is of great value, the plank made from it being equal to any for weatherboarding.

(To be continued.)

MILCH COWS.

In a letter from a gentleman in Scotland to the Editors of the Albany Cultivator, the writer desires to correct a mistake which he says exists in this country, viz: that the Durham short horn cattle are esteemed great milkers in Great Britain. *We*, he remarks, consider the superior excellence of high bred Durhams to rest upon their fine shape, great size, early maturity, and aptitude to fatten. We have no doubt that exactly the same state of things exists in Great Britain that obtains in this country, that is, there is a division in opinion, there as well as here, upon the merits and properties of this breed of cattle. We believe, too, that the two parties, both here and there, although apparently diametrically opposed, are both right. Those who contend for the great milking qualities of the Durhams are certainly right, if the possession of this property by very many of the individuals of the stock will justify them in the general assertion; and the same remark may be made, with equal or greater force, of those who contend for the opposite quality of aptitude to fatten. The explanation of the apparent paradox lies in this; the Durhams are a stock of cattle bred and crossed judiciously, with an eye to securing the valuable qualities of the animal. But the valuable qualities of horned cattle unlike any other quadruped are of two characters, generally supposed to be opposite and inconsistent in their nature; they furnish a solid and fluid nutriment to man. The shape and form which

promises to afford the one to the greatest advantage, is very different from that which indicates the other; but being nearly equal in value, the judicious breeder has retained either the one or the other, as he happened to meet with them. The consequence is that the present race, taking sometimes after one ancestor and sometimes after another, sometimes displays the milking, and sometimes the fattening form. 'Tis true, that in the south of Britain, where this stock is chiefly raised, beef is more valued than milk, and, therefore, we believe, that both there and here, the property of making the one, predominates over the tendency to yield the other, simply because this quality has been most carefully cultivated. We know whole herds of this stock in this neighborhood, purchased chiefly for their supposed universal milking qualities, where not one individual in ten turns out a valuable milker.

But the Durham is unquestionably a highly artificial stock, requiring a continuance of the high keep and generous care that have been so instrumental in bringing them to their present state of perfection. We believe that there are several breeds much better adapted to the scanty herbage of Eastern Virginia, and we concur fully with the writer, to whom we have alluded above, in his national predilection for the Ayrshires. He says: "The Ayrshires are a diminutive variety of Short Horns. They are in great repute as milkers, and are fast spreading over these islands. They are in every sense 'the poor man's cow.' They thrive and give a good portion of milk upon *very short commons*, where larger breeds would starve. There are also high bred or well bred among the Ayrshires, as in the Durhams, and with similar qualifications, with the exception of size."

For the Southern Planter.

RIVER MUD.

Messrs. Editors,—Some time last year I promised a gentleman who was travelling with me on the canal packet to give him the result of an experiment I was making with river mud as a manure. As other persons may likewise be pleased to hear how it succeeded, I have concluded to give the information through the Southern Planter.

I selected the poorest part of my low grounds, near the river, for a tobacco lot; a part of this lot I manured with farm-pen manure, made during the winter; and the remainder with earth taken from near the margin of the river, which had been deposited in the course of a few years;

putting on about double the quantity. The tobacco on the whole lot was very fine, nor was I able to decide which part was best. From this experiment I came to the conclusion, that double the quantity of rich deposit from James River was equal to coarse farm-pen manure.

I have seen in your paper, objections to the practice of hauling leaves to the stables, farm-pens, &c.; and it is urged as the better plan to carry them on the land intended to be manured at once. To these objections I would say, that if oak and chesnut leaves are thus used, the first hard wind, will carry them back to the woods, or deposit them in the corners of the fences; and when ploughed in immediately, which is the only method of saving them, according to my experience, but little benefit is derived; whereas if used as litter in stables, farm-pens, &c. they not only benefit the stock, but are soon converted into fine manure, having absorbed and being saturated with the strength of the dung and urine; and one load used in this manner I consider worth ten hauled from the woods and ploughed in. It may, however, be urged, that the planter has not time to haul the leaves twice. I answer, that if a small force be kept as improvers, he can always find time not only to litter his stables, farm-pens, and hog-pens, (and the quantity of manure made by this means during the year would surprise the inexperienced) but he may remove the rich earth from his ditch banks, to his poorer lands. A force of this kind is always ready to assist in times of pressure, such as planting tobacco, saving clover, harvesting wheat, &c. indeed, I consider my *improvers* as the most profitable part of my laborers.

An experiment I made with ashes as a top dressing on grass, is perhaps worth giving to the public. Having made a large clearing during the winter of 1841, I had the ashes where the log heaps were burnt, as soon as they were cold, taken up and removed to a poor field which was sowed with clover and herdsgrass, and about twenty-five bushels per acre spread over a part of it. The grasses on this part of the field have taken well, and are quite luxuriant, considering how poor it was previous to this top dressing; whilst on the part on which no ashes were put, they have a much feeble appearance, and in many places died during the last summer, and galled spots now disfigure the field.

Respectfully yours,

RICHARD G. MORRIS.

Buckingham, June 25, 1842.

MANGE IN DOGS.

Mr. R. G. Hill, of Caroline, called on us to say that he had resorted to the remedy recommended by Mr. Goode at page 168 of the first

volume of the Planter to relieve a very valuable pointer of the mange and that, instead of curing, it had *killed* him. The fatal effect Mr. Hill attributed to the ointment, as he feels satisfied that arsenic may be given to dogs in any quantity with impunity.

Arsenic is undoubtedly innocuous to dogs, in general; their exemption from its generally fatal effects, is supposed to be derived from a peculiar facility they possess of throwing it off the stomach, by vomiting. If any particular state of system weakens this power, the arsenic may be retained, and will certainly then go on with its work of destruction.

We are inclined to think the dipping in a tan vat, recommended by Dr. Dupuy, is a better and safer remedy than Mr. Goode's.

For the Southern Planter.

MODE OF APPLYING MANURE.

Messrs. Editors,—Of the various methods in which manure is applied to land, that of covering it broadcast is generally esteemed the best, both for the growing crop, and the permanent improvement of the soil. But however heavily it may be put on in this way, there is always liability of an irregular crop being produced. Some spots in the same field require a good deal more manure than others. Some appropriate with more readiness the strength of the manure, and other parts will have less manure put on them, however particular a person may be in spreading it. The consequence is, that a very rich lot frequently does not produce such an average crop as the labor expended on it would seem to promise.

I have for a few years past endeavored to remedy this evil, by applying a hand full of well rotted manure to such plants as look puny and ill grown, about the period when the crop is generally billed up for the first time. At this period, if not before, the field will readily exhibit this difference, and the additional labor of putting it on is not so great as would appear at first view. The manure may be hauled out to the most convenient spots on the edges of the field at any time during the spring, and the small hands with baskets, can soon put the manure around the bad looking plants just before the larger hands, while hilling it up. In fact it is sometimes applied when the tobacco is wed down, and whether covered with dirt at that period or not, it is perhaps just as good a plan. The effects of manure, thus applied, if the weather is seasonable, is truly astonishing. The plant begins at once to grow, and if the weather is not too dry, will soon be as good if not better than

any other in the field. The advantages, therefore, will at once appear.

In order to obtain a very heavy crop of tobacco from a piece of land, every plant must count for itself. If those few plants which grow off badly at first, were finally to come out, they could not attain to the weight, if they did to the size, of those around them. The larger plants shade them too much for the leaves to grow broad, or for the plant to be very heavy. I have never seen an irregular piece of tobacco turn out well in weight.

Finally, Mr. Editor, allow me to congratulate you and the planters upon the increasing circulation of your valuable paper over our State. It is just such an one as our agricultural interest demands. The contributions are generally of a practical character, and no long philosophical theorizing pieces are admitted, to take up room, and to bother the plain planter. There is a spirit of improvement gradually extending itself over the State, and I doubt not that interested motives, as well as the force of circumstances, will push it forward, until we shall witness its effects to a greater or less extent into whatever part of Virginia we may travel.

A COUNTRY SUBSCRIBER.

GRUBS.

From an old Virginia turfman, who is too modest to give his name to the public, we have derived the following statement. He says for the last nine or ten years he has been making use of the following remedy for grubs, with instantaneous and invariable success.

Upon a piece of chalk, the size of a cubic inch, he pours a pint of moderately strong vinegar; when the effervescence has ceased, he empties it into a bottle, and drenches the patient.

We know no gentleman upon whose judgment or statement we would sooner rely than the one affording this recipe, and he esteems it so highly, that he called at our office, at some inconvenience, expressly that it might be given to the public.

INFLAMMABLE GAS.

The lightness of inflammable gas is well known: when bladders of any size are filled with it, they rise upwards and float in the air. Now it is a most curious fact, ascertained by Knight, that the fine dust, by means of which plants are impregnated one from another, is composed of very small globules filled with this gas—in a word, of small air-balloons. These globules thus float from the male plant through the air, and striking against plants of the other sex, are detained by a glutinous substance pre-

pared on purpose to stop them, which no sooner moistens the globules than they explode, and their substance remains; the gas, which enabled them to float, flying off. A provision of a very simple kind is also in some cases made to prevent the male and female blossoms of the same plant from uniting; this being found to injure the breed of vegetables just as breeding "in and in" spoils the race of animals. In this case, it is contrived that the dust shall be shed by the male blossom before the female of the same plant is ready to be affected by it; so that the impregnation must be performed by the dust of some other plant, and in this way the breed be crossed. And the levity of the gas with which the globules are filled is most essential to the operation, as it conveys them to great distances. A plantation of yew-trees has been known in this way to impregnate another several hundred yards distant.—*Brougham.*

SOILING.

A writer in the "American Farmer," comparing the advantages of soiling and grazing, makes the following remarks:

"In grazing, an acre of *good* grass is considered necessary to the support of each head of stock; of *ordinary* grass one and a half, or two acres are not more than enough. In England, where the soiling system has been very generally adopted, and carried on with care, according to Mr. Curwen's experience, three acres of grass cut and carried, supplied 30 milch-cows, with 28 lbs. each, daily, during a period of 200 days. To have supplied a similar number of cows, with a like quantity for the same period, would in the usual way of management, have required 75 acres of land for its production. And to have grazed such a number of cows at liberty that length of time, must, it is obvious, have taken a very considerable number of acres. Again he says:

"This vast produce from so small a piece of land, may at first appear very problematical; but experience and good management will soon convince the dairyman that he may realize the advantage, great as it may appear. To enable the meadow to support this exhaustion from the scythe, it should be cleared at the end of every autumn, from all kinds of weeds and rubbish, and fresh grass-seeds of the best kinds, cast upon the bare places. A coat of good rotten manure, or ashes, should then be allowed, consisting of all that can be collected from the household, or procured elsewhere, mixed up and augmented with virgin earth."

"If we admit that the number of acres assumed by Mr. Curwen, three and a half to each cow, be too great, and take one, the minimum quantity named by us, as the proper one, then

there will still be a saving of 27 acres of grass by the soiling over the depasturing system. And if we reserve this grass to be cut for hay, it will give a sufficient quantity to carry the cows through the winter, or foddering season; so that, to this amount there will be a clear gain. Then let us add the immense quantity of manure, which will be accumulated in the soiling-yard, and we cannot hesitate a moment in coming to an opinion as to the relative merits of the two plans of feeding stock; for all will admit that summer-made manure is very far better than that made in winter, as also that the most of the droppings in pastures is lost, by means of evaporation and rains, to all the available purposes of the farm, and no one will contend, that the cost of the price of half the labor of one hand, and that of a horse and cart during the time, should be considered to be of more value than the savings we have pointed out. Suppose that, in addition to the accumulation of manure from the droppings of the cattle, the yard be covered some nine or twelve inches deep with mould or other earth from the woods, or head lands, to act as absorbents of the cattle's stable—we say, suppose this be done, and we will venture the assertion, that every square foot of such mould or earth would be so saturated with the urine of the cows as to be equally as valuable as their droppings. Thus, then, in whatever light we may consider the subject, the advantages in favor of soiling are apparent to the judgment.

"It may be urged against the soiling system that it would not afford the requisite exercise to the stock. We are free to admit that exercise, to a certain extent, is necessary to the health of the brute creature, but at the same time we are free to maintain, that all that is indispensably necessary to ensure health and comfort, may be obtained in a yard of a fourth of an acre in extent, and we doubt much if regularly fed and watered therein at stated hours through the day, and salted semi-weekly, whether they would not maintain as much physical vigor thus confined, as they would roaming at large in a pasture of many acres. It is questionable with us also, whether they would not yield fully as much if not more milk and butter. At all events, the experiment is worthy of a trial, and we, therefore, commend it to our readers' consideration."

FARM ACCOUNTS.

What would be thought of a merchant, who did not keep a set of books, and who, at the end of the year, could not tell whether a certain branch of his business had been productive or not? And why is not a farmer as much interested in the result of his operations, as a merchant? The pettiest shop keeper must have a

clerk to keep his books, with double entries, and yet the most extensive farmer, operating with thousands, keeps no record of his proceedings. The manufacturer opens an account with each department of his business, charging it with the stock employed, the expenses incurred, and crediting it with its products. At the end of the year, he sees at a glance whether it has been productive or not, and concludes to lop it off, or to extend it. So should the farmer open an account with every crop he cultivates; charge it with the outlay, and credit with the proceeds. At the end of the year, he should take another account of the stock on hand, and he will see, at once, how he stands on the year's operation. If he is unable to keep so simple an account, he should employ a clerk; (although he had better go to school himself,) he certainly needs his assistance as much as a merchant. But there is no difficulty about the matter, and extracts from a farmer's books well kept, would form the most valuable contributions to an agricultural paper.

For the Southern Planter.

CORN RAKES.

Messrs. Editors,—I desire to bring to the notice of your corn planters an implement from which I have derived the greatest benefit in the cultivation of my crops. I allude to the common hand rake. I am aware, sir, that it is not new, and that it has been tried and discarded by some; but this I am sure has happened only where the experiment has not had a fair trial.

Corn is frequently much infested with grass before it is large enough to be ploughed, especially in a rainy season. Now, whilst it is so low that the plough would cover and smother it, I run a simple coulter on each side, as close as possible to the corn, then with fine rakes the hands proceed from one end of the row to the other, dragging out the loose grass, pulverising the clods, and freeing the corn. This operation is performed with great rapidity and the effect upon the crop is astonishing. By this means, I can work my corn two, and sometimes three or four, weeks before my neighbors; and whilst their fields are full of grass, "waiting for a season," mine are clean and fine, affording all the nutriment of the soil to the crop. I would not be deprived of the use of my rakes, one year, for five hundred dollars.

Your obedient servant,

E. G.

We know the writer of the above, and know that he has the reputation of a skilful, intelligent, practical farmer. Individually, we should

be inclined to think highly of his plan, but we know some of our best farmers who disapprove of it. We should be glad to hear their objections.

IMPROVEMENTS IN BLACKSMITHING.

Sawing heated iron or steel, is not known or thought of by blacksmiths; and when several forks or branches are to be formed from one stock, even if the branches are required to remain eventually, nearly in contact and parallel to each other, the usual method is to split the end of the iron with an awkward cold chissel, thereby deforming the edges of each branch; on which account, the branches must be bent asunder for the purpose of hammering, squaring and shaping the edges of each; after which they are brought together as well as may be, usually retaining a roughness of form, if not a deficiency of size and strength, near the juncture of the branches. Instead of this tedious process, the iron when heated may be put into a vise, and the end may be readily slit with a suitable saw, which would save much labor of hammering and filing. A saw for this purpose should be made thicker at the edge than at the back, and with uniform teeth about one-twelfth of an inch apart. The saw, when used, must be often dipped in water, to prevent its becoming too much heated. There is also a method of cutting or sawing hardened steel, which is not so generally known as it should be. A circular piece of common thin iron plate, or sheet iron, being adjusted in a lathe, or by other means put into a violent rotary motion, it will readily cut off a file, a cutting tool, or a tempered steel spring, without drawing or reducing the temper. There is much mystery in the wonderful effect of this buz, and its cutting property is attributed to electricity. It answers a very convenient purpose, however, when the shape and form of articles are required to be altered, without affecting their temper. It furnishes a convenient method of cutting teeth to large saws, but is objectionable on account of the newly cut surfaces being left so hard that they cannot be readily filed by a common file. Connected with the subject of "mysterious effects," it may be stated that a bar of iron of almost any size, may be instantly sundered while hot, by the simple application of a piece of common roll-brimstone. A knowledge of this fact will be useful, when some piece of iron work is required to be severed, but which, as is sometimes the case, is so constructed and situated that no ordinary chissel or cutting tool can be brought to apply. Holes may be perforated through bars or plates of heated iron, by the application of a pointed piece of brimstone, and that instantly. This phenomenon is curious, although it seldom affords much practical utility.—*Mechanic*.

SANDY SOILS.

The Editor of the Massachusetts Ploughman being called on for his advice upon the treatment of sandy soils that will not hold manure, recommends the application of ten cords of clay, or five cords of leached ashes, to the acre; the coating of clay, if it can be had conveniently, to be put on some time in autumn. But there is no crop he says so appropriate to light, sandy soils as buckwheat.

"This is quite as sure a crop as any of the English grains, and our poorest lands will produce it. In Virginia and in New York this grain succeeds well—even the worn out soils of the Ancient Dominion that will yield but five bushels of corn per acre will give double that quantity and value of buckwheat, and at less than half the expense.

"This is a summer grain and it will not impoverish a poor soil. But turning in one crop in June and sowing another on the furrow, to be harvested, a poor soil will improve from year to year, and twenty to thirty bushels may be counted on as an average yield. We have thousands of acres of such lands in Massachusetts which now lie idle. Buckwheat usually commands \$1 25 to \$1 50 per bushel every spring though nobody is ready to buy it in autumn. But it may be used by every farmer at home, and a bushel of it is worth more for hogs and for hens than a bushel of corn.

"Buckwheat should be sown in the latter part of June; some farmers sow as late as July 4th. When a field is kept for the buckwheat the scattering seeds of the previous year will sometimes be sufficient without sowing any in June. One bushel per acre will be sufficient where no seed is in the ground; half a bushel is the usual quantity in other cases.

"The buckwheat may be saved for the grain, or it may be ploughed in when full in blossom to enrich the soil, and grass seed may be sown on the same ground in August, with or without other manure."

Sorrel, he says, never raises its head where Buckwheat is sown. If the land is naturally too light and porous for grass, keep it for Buckwheat from year to year, and the sorrel will never be troublesome. This product will grow and spread sufficiently even on poor land to smother all other plants on sandy loams.

For the Southern Planter.

CORN.

There is no one subject in agriculture that is more peculiarly interesting to us than the cultivation of Indian corn. In the first place, it is

the national crop; in the second, it bears with it a spice of romance, as being intimately connected with that race upon whom only the sacred hand of antiquity has yet impressed the stamp of poetry in this *new* world; but thirdly, and chiefly, because it is believed to be the most valuable vegetable growth, take it all in all, cultivated by the hand of man. I do not believe either that our savage predecessors, or our tobacco making ancestors, ever brought the cultivation of this noble vegetable to perfection. I am very sure that the system of neither the one nor the other was of the character best adapted to the present state of our soil. Neglected, as to a certain extent, this valuable crop now is, still, in point of profit, it need not shrink from a comparison with either of its haughty rivals, wheat, or tobacco. Facts and experience, which settle the claims of high and low, will prove the corn growing to be as independent and prosperous as any other interest in the State. But it is my settled conviction, that a thorough examination into its nature and character would induce an improvement in its cultivation, that would place this vegetable of indigenous growth upon a much more elevated position than it even now occupies. It is very true that thousands of intelligent farmers have been for hundreds of years cultivating this simple crop, and it would seem wonderful that there should be any thing yet to learn about it; but that no fixed principles have been as yet established, is vouched by the fact that there are still as many opinions about the simplest points in its management, as there are different cultivators. That this variety of opinion exists, arises, I believe, from the fact that, until the late establishment of agricultural papers, men ploughed, sowed, and reaped, without thinking at all; at any rate, without receiving from each other the advantages of their mutual observations. Until within the last ten or twelve years, the darkness of the middle ages covered the agricultural history of America. Indeed, it was not until our exhausted soils forced us to bring mind to the assistance of matter, that our farmers began to think at all, and it was not until the general establishment of a medium of communication, that any thing but the wildest guesses, founded upon the loosest facts, occupied the cultivators of the earth.—Mortifying as this picture of ignorance may be to many of your older readers, it is nevertheless true, and when they reflect, how they themselves were in former days immersed, soul and body, in *politics*, they will be forced to concede that the science of agriculture found little space in the minds of their contemporaries.

But, thanks to the good sense of our deep-thinking, practical people, as the stern necessity of an exhausted soil demanded a different course of conduct, they have lately begun to investigate the secrets of the great business in which

they are employed, and hence it is, that, although we have been cultivating corn for hundreds of years, we are now just upon the threshold of discovery with respect to its nature and character.

These remarks, which I hope, if not very flattering, will not prove very tedious, have been elicited by reading an excellent essay on the subject in the "Southern Agriculturist" from the pen of Dr. L. R. Sams, of South Carolina.

Dr. Sams, as the result of several investigations upon the roots of corn, found them to consist chiefly of perpendicular roots, from which numerous smaller ones proceeded horizontally. The depth, number, and proportion, of the perpendicular roots, the Doctor found to depend very much upon the nature of the soil in which they grew. In a very light, sandy soil, incumbent on a loose subsoil, he found an average of twenty-five perpendicular roots, from three and a half to four feet long. The size and extent of the lateral roots he found to be dependent upon the fertility and moisture of the surface soils. In a poor soil, of a dry season, they did not exceed two or three inches in length, while many were much shorter; on the other hand, in a rich moist soil, these lateral roots were very much increased, not only in numbers, but in all their dimensions, a large proportion of them extending from one to two feet or more from the stalk.

On a close, heavy soil, based on a stiff subsoil, the perpendicular roots were found more numerous, but shorter, reaching an average depth of only two feet. The horizontal roots, though of smaller diameter than the perpendicular, were so much more developed than in the former case, especially when favored by a moist and mellow soil, as to traverse and occupy the entire intervals (a space of five feet) between the rows.

The practical deductions that Dr. Sams draws from these facts, are, that if the soil is made rich and mellow to a considerable depth, the perpendicular roots will naturally penetrate to that depth, and as he found that the extension of the side roots along the surface was chiefly a substitute of nature for the obstruction of the perpendicular roots, he concludes, that whenever free passage is afforded the latter through rich ground, that this plant will be furnished by these means with food and moisture, even during a drought; when the lateral or surface roots, that would otherwise supply their place, would be entirely parched and killed. Again, where a free descent is afforded through a mellow soil, the roots will be found almost wholly within a circle of two feet, of which the stalk is the centre; consequently, present economy would recommend the application of manure within that space. On the contrary, where, from the nature of the subsoil, the support is derived from the horizontal roots, the application of manure in

the hill would fail to furnish the roots that had extended beyond its influence with their food at the most critical period of the plant, viz: the filling of the ear. Firing, Dr. Sams considers, as nothing more than the failure of a supply of food and moisture to this most succulent and sappy of all the vegetable tribe; and close planting leads to this fatal consequence, only, because, in our usual mode of cultivation, the plant is dependent for a supply of food and moisture on its lateral roots, which can only find a sufficient supply for one stalk within a given space.

One thing is certain, that very large crops can only be obtained by close planting, and it is a great desideratum to know how that can be effected without the danger of firing, that usually attends it in this region.

It is only by a strict examination into facts with all their attendant circumstances, such as the world is indebted to Dr. Sams for, that any correct or philosophical conclusions can be arrived at. He may possibly have erred in the inferences he has drawn, but the agricultural community are at least indebted to him for the communication of the interesting facts he has observed.

Yours, with the best wishes for the success of your useful and practical paper,

A CORN GROWER.

PLASTER.

Mr. C. Robinson, in the Farmers' Gazette, adds his testimony to the value of Plaster. He thinks that doubts of its efficacy have arisen only from the use either of an inferior article, or of one badly ground—he asserts that it will be comparatively inoperative, unless ground as fine as flour. He particularly cautions farmers against the use of the coarse, gritty article that is generally brought in casks from the State of Maine.

For the Southern Planter.

BLACK SHEEP.

Messrs. Editors,—A neighbor selected a very likely young ram which he designed "turning out" and at shearing time made known such intention to his "headman," Peter. The shearing being over, Peter came to his master and said the lamb he had selected would not do to "turn out" unless he wished to have black sheep in his flock. How do you make that out, Pete? said his master; the lamb is the whitest in the flock. That may be, replied Pete, but I tell you half his lambs will be black, *for he has a BLACK STREAK under his tongue*. The master and myself in talking upon the subject came to the conclusion that a greater man than Pete had advanced the same opinion, and accordingly

we picked up an old Virgil and commenced the search. After no little trouble, we found the following:—(Geo. 3—387.)

“Illum autem, quamvis aries sit candidus ipse,
Nigra subest udo tantum cui lingua palato,
Rejice, ne maculis infuscet vellera pullis,
Nascentum.”

The English of which, I presume is, but, though the ram himself may be white, reject him, under whose moist palate there is a black tongue,

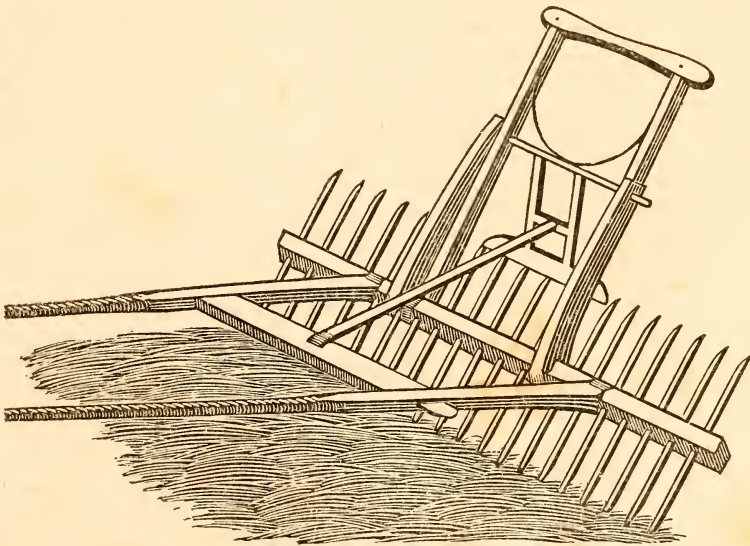
that he may not darken the fleeces of the lambs with blackish spots.

Whether Pete borrowed the idea from the “Mantuan Bard” or not is a matter of no consequence. The question for you, Mr. Botts, or some of your correspondents is—is the idea correct. We have, you see, the opinion of a “book farmer” and a practical one—of an ancient and a modern—a great man and a little one.

Nottoway.

P. B. W.

REVOLVING HORSE RAKE.



We here present our readers with a cut of the revolving rake so highly spoken of by Mr. Fontaine, in the July number of the Planter. The rake is carried forward with one set of teeth in front, until they are filled; the catches at the sides of the handles are then thrown up, and the points of the teeth in use directed to the ground. Of course the other set of teeth are drawn over, the rake revolving on the first set, which are thereby relieved; the catches are again fastened, and the workman proceeds with his operation.

This rake is highly esteemed to the North, and may be found in any agricultural store—price, from eight to ten dollars; but no farmer ought to go off his own plantation to have it made. It is constructed almost entirely of wood, and may be made by the rudest carpenter. We

have received the model, which will be exhibited to any gentleman wishing to see it.

For the Southern Planter.

PHILOSOPHY.

What nonsense is daily put forth under color of this august name. The desire to explain every thing upon *philosophical* principles is the rage of the day. So far has this mania extended, that the universal solver of all difficulties hardly waits for the ascertainment of facts, but is equally ready to explain phenomena that do or do not exist. Nowhere is this feeling more prevalent than amongst the contributors to agricultural papers. The desire to secure the title of *philosopher*, gives rise to a thousand theories for the support of which *facts* can be found, as plenty as blackberries. The simplest and most

familiar occurrence is now a-days explained upon scientific principles, and the poor farmer, who reads an agricultural paper, is lost in the mazes of metaphysics.

These ideas have frequently occurred to me before, but they were impressed on my mind with more than usual force on reading a communication in the last Cabinet, upon the "Pressure of the atmosphere," signed by D. C.

The amount of the article is, that D. C. recommends all pedestrians to seek a rough, unequal path instead of a smooth and level one, as he found by experience that his feet were blistered and his legs wearied much sooner on the latter than the former. Then D. C. proceeds to account for this fact, of course, in the most approved form; he had read a dialogue between Frank and his father, in which Frank was informed that when two smooth and level surfaces were brought in contact, so as to exclude the air from between, the pressure of the atmosphere around them induced them to adhere, and made them difficult of separation. The philosophic mind of D. C. immediately came to the conclusion, that the bottom of his foot and the smooth path were two such surfaces, and it was very evident that for the last hour he had been raising a weight of fifteen pounds to the square inch upon his foot, which if it is as broad as it is flat, must have incommoded him exceedingly, beyond a doubt. To test his theory, he immediately tried a rougher path, and *of course*, the pressure of the atmosphere was counteracted by the air now admitted between his foot and the ground, and the wearied and laboring man found immediate relief from his heavy burden, and went on his way rejoicing.

This foot of D. C.'s is only excelled by the traditional record of the lady, the hollow of whose foot made a hole in the ground.

By such stuff are the readers of agricultural papers frequently gorged, until it is no wonder that they conceive a distaste to book farming and agricultural papers. But justice requires me to state that no paper is less liable to this charge, in the general, than the highly practical one in which this communication appears. It deserves all the commendation you, Mr. Editor, have bestowed upon it, and I have only noticed the piece in the manner I have, to encourage you in the plan you have adopted of furnishing your readers with plain practical observations in the place of long, fine spun agricultural theories.

Yours with respect,

ANTI PHILOSOPHY.

COTTON.

In a former number we adverted to the difference of opinion that existed upon the prospect of the future cotton trade in America. Many fears are entertained, and expressed, that we are

to be superseded in this important article of commerce by the products of other countries of greater supposed advantages. What seems a little extraordinary is, that these fears are confined to the manufacturing interests, and do not extend at all to the planters of the South, who are so deeply interested in the subject. When we remember that cotton alone has constituted in value more than two-thirds of the exports of the domestic produce of the United States, this question becomes one of the greatest national importance, and of the most universal interest; and we have adverted to it again, chiefly, for the purpose of laying before our readers the following extracts from a speech of Mr. Calhoun's, in the Senate of the United States, which strikes us as affording the soundest and most dispassionate view of the subject, which has yet been submitted to the public. After quoting the authority of an English paper to show, that the late attempts to extend the culture of cotton in India were likely to result in total failure, he proceeds to say,

"In confirmation of the opinion of the writer of the article, that of intelligent individuals, well acquainted with the country, might be added, who speak with confidence that, taking price and quality into consideration, we have nothing serious to apprehend. We might, indeed, have something to fear during the continuance of the Chinese war. That country is the principal market for the cotton of Hindostan, and while it remains closed, the cotton intended for its market may be thrown in such quantities on the European, as may materially depress the price. But the present relation between Great Britain and China cannot long continue. It cannot be doubted that the former will at last succeed in opening the market of China to the commerce of the world, to a much greater extent than it has ever been heretofore—when, so far from competing with us, the cotton of Hindostan will not be sufficient to supply the demands of that great market.

"But I am not ignorant that we must rely for holding the cotton market on our superior skill, industry, and capacity for producing the article. Nearly, if not altogether, one-half of the solid contents of the globe is capable of producing cotton; and that too in the portion the most populous, and where labor is the cheapest. We may have rivals everywhere in a belt 70 degrees at least, lying on each side of the equator, and extending around the globe. Not only the far East, but all Western Asia, quite to the 35th or even the 40th degree of latitude, a large portion of Europe, almost all Africa, and a large portion of this continent, may be said to be a

cotton producing region. When the price of cotton rises high, a large portion of that immense region becomes our competitors in its production, which invariably results in a great fall of price, when a struggle follows for the market. In that struggle, we have ever heretofore succeeded, and I have no fear, with fair play on the part of our own government, we will continue to be successful against the world. We have the elements of success within us. A favorable soil and climate, a plenty of cheap land, held in fee simple, without rent, tithe, or poor rates. But above all, we have a cheap and efficient body of laborers, the best fed, clothed, trained, and provided for, of any in the whole cotton growing region, for whose labor we have paid in advance. I say paid for in advance, *for our property in our slaves, is but wages purchased in advance, including the support and supplies of the laborers*, which is usually very liberal.

With these advantages we may bid defiance to Hindoo or Egyptian labor, at its two or three cents a day. Ours being already paid for, is, as far as the question of competition is concerned, still cheaper, to say nothing of its superior efficiency, its better and more skilful direction under the immediate eye of intelligent proprietors, of cheap, unincumbered land, favorable soil and climate, and greater facility and cheapness of transportation to the great markets of the world. But this is not all. We have another and great advantage. There is not a people on earth who can so well bear the curtailing of profits, as the Southern planters, when out of debt. A plantation is a little community of itself, which, when hard pressed, can furnish within itself almost all of its supplies. Ours is a fine provision country, and, when needs be, can furnish most of its supplies of food and clothing from its own resources. In prosperous times, when the price of our staples is high, our labor is almost exclusively directed to their production, and then we freely and liberally part with their proceeds in exchange for horses, mules, cattle, hogs, and provisions of all description from the West, and clothing and all the products of the arts with the North and East; but when prices fall, and pressure comes, we gradually retire on our own means, and draw our own supplies from within.

"With these great advantages, it is not wonderful, that in all the great struggles that we have had for the cotton market, (they have been many and great,) we have ever come off successful. It is incident to that great staple article, cotton, the first in the whole circle of commerce, to be subject to extraordinary vibrations of price from the causes to which I have alluded. At one time prices are high, and profit great, and at another low, and the profits small. It can be permanently cultivated only by those who can best go through these great vibrations."

For the Southern Planter.

"WHAT DO YOU GAIN BY SUBSCRIBING TO AGRICULTURAL PAPERS?"

Messrs. Editors,—I was permitted a short time since, to listen to an interesting discussion of the question which heads this article. A servant having entered the room with a bundle of newspapers, the political ones were devoured with greediness. What periodical is that? was asked, after a while, by one of the party, at the same time pointing to a very neat little publication that till now had lain unnoticed on the table. The "Planter," was the reply. This led to the following conversation:

Capt. A. What Mr. B. do you gain by subscribing to agricultural papers? You seem not to have any cows that will yield eight gallons of milk per day.

B. No, I have not; and indeed, under present circumstances I am pretty well satisfied if two of mine yield that quantity.

A. Then why waste your money in subscribing for, and your time in reading such papers? None of your hogs that I have seen, seem likely to weigh 365 lbs. at twelve months old.

B. True, I have none that will reach that notch—yet I believe others have had such, and moreover that you and I may have such if we will but take the necessary pains.

A. Certainly, *if we will* but send to Mr. A. B. Allen, of New York, for a \$500 boar and a couple of \$200 sows—then feed them and their offspring during the summer on cream and peaches, in the winter on plum puddings and—

B. And without all that trouble and expense, neighbor A. The truth is, my friend, you seem to have formed a very erroneous opinion of agricultural papers. Were you to read them attentively, you would be better able to select the information best suited to *your particular situation*.

A. Well, neighbor B. you have been a constant reader of them for eight or ten years, suppose you sum up in as few words as possible the actual amount of benefit you have received from them.

B. Why, sir, the age of miracles has long since passed by, and of course you do not expect any have been wrought by me. But as you desire it you shall be gratified, if not improved. In the first place, from them I imbibed a *desire for improvement*. Every man who reflects at all, is convinced that the system of farming in Virginia needs a material change. It will not do to pursue "the old track" any farther. To say that our fathers did well (which is not true of all of them) is no evidence that we must likewise do well. Some admit these facts but break forth with the doleful exclamation, "we can't help ourselves." From the experience of others, as detailed in agricultural papers, we are convinced that industrious, sys-

tematic farmers are successful ones. It is the province of these papers to point out the proper systems—to detail the results of unsuccessful as well as successful experiments—to disclose useful discoveries—to collect, embody and send forth the experience of others for the benefit of such farmers as you and myself. They serve as monitors to remind the farmer of his various duties—to excite him to continued and increased activity. The farmer's life is a varied one, yet he too has to spend some dull, monotonous moments. How are these beguiled, yea how profitably spent, if we but have these unobtrusive visitors, whose voice is soft, whose conversation instructive, whose morals are pure, whose censures breathe *only* the spirit of friendly admonition. Let these continue (and I hope they will) to be the principles on which agricultural periodicals are conducted and they will not shortly be considered the least of Heaven's choicest blessings.

At this point dinner was announced—serious reflections seemed to be passing through the mind of Captain A.—nor shall the conversation be soon forgotten by

AN OBSERVER.

COAL ASHES.

In a late number of the Farmers' Register there appears an excellent article from the pen of the Rev. Jesse H. Turner, "giving his experience" in renovating poor land. The scene of Mr. Turner's operations lies within two miles of the city of Richmond, which has enabled him to make the most liberal use of manure. He found his grounds a worn out waste, and he has converted them into a beautiful and productive farm. The finest crop of oats we have seen this year has been grown on one of his fields. Mr. Turner's success only proves what industry, perseverance, and judgment may effect, even under the most discouraging circumstances.—The character of his soil was, we believe, originally of the most unpromising kind, abandoned by its former proprietor as almost worthless, and prized at all, only, on account of its contiguity to the city. Much of it was a low slash of pipe clay, generally considered the most worthless of soils—yet, this has been converted into a very productive and extremely profitable meadow. At what expense this has been effected, we do not know. We presume that to improve such land, under ordinary circumstances, would, like the Indian's gun, cost more than it would come to; but Mr. Turner has availed himself of his propinquity to the sources of im-

provement, with, we doubt not, great judgment and profit, and the high state of improvement exhibited on his farm, puts to shame many, who, with equal opportunities and better soil, are not reaping half his crops.

Great quantities of coal are consumed in this city, and we remember when piles of coal ashes encumbered the lots of our citizens, reckoned a nuisance, to be removed only at considerable expense. Mr. Turner claims to have been the first to establish the character of this article as an improver of the soil. He first applied the coal ashes only to his white livery flats, from which, he says, he, the very next season, reaped as luxuriant a crop of grass as he ever saw grow on the rich bottoms of the upper country. Encouraged by his success, he next applied them to his light, high land with equal effect. He says:

"On a part of a field which I cultivated in corn I applied putrescent manures; on another part, lying along the side of it, I applied coal ashes. The season, especially the latter part of it, was rather a bad one for corn. About the time of earing, it was attacked with a drought from which the crop suffered severely. But I could but notice the striking difference in the two portions of the field. Where the manure was applied the blades fired, and the product was indifferent; whereas, where the ashes was put, the corn maintained a vigorous green, even to the lowest blade, and the crop was a heavy one.

"There is also another circumstance which highly recommends the coal ashes as a manure, and that is, that they are not only speedy, but *permanent* in their effects. How long they will last, and still manifest their efficacy, I cannot tell. I can point to places on my farm which were enriched by them ten years ago, and these places are rich still. Every time I plough I bring up portions of these ashes, and they appear as fresh as they were when first applied. Whether they have the faculty of fixing other manures in the soil, I cannot tell, but this I know that they have the wonderful faculty of fixing themselves. From the fact of their exceedingly slow decomposition, one would suppose that they had but little, if any efficacy. But when I see those places on which they have been deposited, closely covered with a strong turf, I must conclude that there is a powerful influence at work, though I cannot understand the mode of its operation."

The chief value of this article, however, Mr. Turner conceives to consist in its action as a top dressing on the grasses. Used in this way, he

says, it uniformly acts like a charm. He then remarks :

"There is, however, one great drawback to the value of this article, and that is its great weight. When sobbed by the rains of winter, (and most of it is in this condition,) 12 bushels is a good load for an ordinary team. Indeed my mules often suffer very much under their task of three loads per day to the distance of about three miles. Upon the whole, I am so thoroughly convinced of the enriching qualities of coal ashes, that could I find a bed of them on my farm, I should feel myself amply compensated for the want of the richest marl."

We are inclined to believe that the chief value of the article is derived from this very absorbent power of which Mr. Turner complains. Coal ashes upon analysis yield a small portion of sulphate of lime, (gypsum) charcoal, and lime; the proportions of the first and last are too small to be very active, and it is the charcoal, probably, which, by its great absorbent power, enables the ashes to hold in readiness for future use the valuable gases as they are disengaged from the decomposing manures.

We should not omit to mention, that, upon the land where the ashes were found so beneficial, heavy applications of putrescent manures had been previously made.

For the Southern Planter.

VIRGINIA REAPER.

Big Lick, Roanoke, July 13, 1842.

Messrs. Editors,—I have been surprised that the "Virginia Reaper," invented by Cyrus H. McCormick, of Rockbridge, has not received some notice in our agricultural papers. I am satisfied that it is one of the most important implements which has been presented to the agriculturist for many years. I understand it has been patented since 1833, but the patentee, with a most commendable patience and prudence, determined not to hazard the reputation of his invention by supplying the public demand, till he had scrutinized, tested, and perfected it by several years of private experience. After eight or nine years of careful observation, he again appears before the public, prepared to guarantee with confidence the performance of his reaper. I and others embraced the first opportunity of supplying ourselves, and have used them as far as was practicable in our late wheat harvest. So far as I have any knowledge of the opinions of those who have purchased them, or of those who have witnessed their performance, there is an unanimous concurrence in the belief that the

machine is fully equal to every thing said of it in its advertisement.

I have tested it satisfactorily in every grade and condition of wheat; in that which was very light, as well as that, which would have yielded, but for the rust, from thirty to forty bushels per acre; in that which was erect and in that which was tangled and fallen, and found it to operate, in every instance, with surprising neatness and efficiency, scarcely leaving a head and but slightly influenced in the number of acres cut in a given time by the condition of the grain. It was found to cut tangled and fallen grain where ever it was not too flat to be reached by the sickle as well as that which was standing.—The neatness and completeness with which the crop is saved is scarcely conceivable to one who has not witnessed its work. Those most wedded to the cradle, admit that the reaper will save on an average at least one bushel more to the acre in standing wheat than the best cradling, whilst in tangled grain the saving would be augmented to double, treble, or even quadruple that amount. So that the machine, which costs only an hundred dollars, will pay for itself in cutting an ordinary crop.

The machine too is simple and substantial; of course, not liable to get out of order, and when from casualty deranged or broken, easily rectified or repaired by an ordinary mechanic. It will cut with facility fifteen acres per day, and when pushed, at least twenty. Two hands attend it with ease as rider and raker, relieving each other regularly, and five or six will bind the grain with more ease than they would bind the same quantity of grain after cradlers and rakers, as the machine leaves it straight and in piles large enough for several sheaves. It is fully equal to five choice cradlers, who would require five rakers and five binders to follow them, making fifteen in all. Thus, you see there is a saving of the labor of eight hands in every day's cutting of the reaper. It performs equally well on rolling and undulating as level land and by taking steep hills obliquely, so as to graduate the ascent, the difficulty with them will be in a great degree obviated.

I refer you to the advertisement of Mr. McCormick in the Enquirer of October or November, 1841, for a minute and satisfactory description of the machine, and would suggest the propriety of your appending it as a note to this letter, for the satisfaction of your readers. I will merely add, in closing this communication, the testimony of a lowland farmer, who has had three of the machines in operation this summer.

Mr. Corbin Braxton, in a transcript with which I have been provided, says, "I have had three of Mr. C. H. McCormick's Patent Reapers at work this harvest under my immediate observation; one on the farm on which I reside, and two others on farms under my management,

and take pleasure in stating, that the operation of all has been fully equal to my expectations; and indeed rather exceeded it, as indeed that of all others who witnessed the operation of the machine. Mr. McCormick's advertisement is fully sustained. It will certainly cut from fifteen to twenty acres per day, if well attended to, and leaves not a straw that can be brought in contact with the cutter. It has been worked this harvest under every disadvantage which it was possible almost to bring to bear against it, in consequence of the unprecedented weather we have had. It will cut any wheat that is not too low for the reel and teeth to reach it. It does not appear to me to be as liable to get out of order as a common cradle, and I should think it would be very durable. The Reaper has cut all descriptions of wheat, green, ripe, rusted as badly as wheat could have it, lying and standing. And I have no hesitation in saying, that I believe it one of the most important agricultural improvements of the day, and think that every farmer cutting fifty acres of wheat would find it to his advantage to have one. No weather has prevented the Reaper from working, except when the ground was so soft as to mire the wheels.

Signed, CORBIN BRAXTON.
Chericoke, June 28, 1842."

I send you this hurried letter in the hope that it will be sufficient to awaken public attention to this important invention of a native citizen and be the means of introducing speedily an implement which will promote the prosperity of agriculture and at the same time be a source of emolument to the individual to whose genius and industry we are so much indebted.

Yours, respectfully,
W. M. PEYTON.

We published a notice of this implement, at page 217 of our first volume, and shall be very happy to afford the worthy inventor any farther facility in extending a knowledge of the merits of his machine.

For the Southern Planter.

MUSQUITE GRASS.

Albemarle, July 16, 1842.

Messrs. Editors,—Since I sent you the sample of grass noticed in your July number, I have received information by a gentleman from South Carolina, a near neighbor of Col. Wade Hampton's, that the Musquite grass of Texas is in every respect similar to the grass which I cultivate. He also brought some of the seed from Mr. Hampton's. The same grass is likewise found in this county, growing on a farm formerly occupied by a son of the late James Maury, Consul at Liverpool. It now appears from the information obtained, that the Musquite grass of

Texas is the same grass known in Europe as the *Holcus Lanatus*; but by whatever name it may be called, I esteem it a valuable grass and worthy the attention of farmers. It is not inferior to the orchard grass for grazing, and yields a better hay; it is a better grazing grass than the timothy, and equally good for hay—and preferable to the herds-grass for either hay or grazing. This grass produces seed in greater abundance than either of the above mentioned grasses, and succeeds well on lands suited to the production of either of them. I prefer seeding this grass with clover to those other grasses. It ripens two weeks before timothy, and a few days later than the orchard grass. In saving the seed I cut it above the tops of the clover with the cradle, and then cut what remains with the clover for hay.

Respectfully yours,
WILLIAM D. MERIWETHER.

Captain Meriwether has been kind enough to leave a bundle of the seed of this grass at our office for distribution.

For the Southern Planter.

DOG TRAP.

Messrs. Editors,—I have long esteemed my sheep the most convenient and profitable stock I raise, and should have greatly increased my flock but for the annoyance to which I am subjected, in common with my neighbors, from the dogs that surround us. Having heard of a trap for catching these thievish and murderous scoundrels, I have resorted to it with great success, and strongly recommend it to the consideration of my fellow-sufferers. I simply make a pen of fence rails, in an exposed situation, five or six feet high, narrowing it in towards the top like a partridge trap. A hole of two feet square is left open on the top, and the trap is baited with a quarter of unskinned lamb, or if necessary, a living animal is used as the lure to this insidious snare. The dog finds no difficulty in mounting the trap from the outside, and pouncing on his victim through the hole in the top, but when he has indulged his barbarous appetite, and desires to return, he finds the difference between a concavity and a convexity, and for the light he thus obtains in natural philosophy, he pays the forfeit of his life next morning.

My success on several occasions has induced one or two of my neighbors to resort to the same remedy, which has been equally efficient with them.

Your obedient servant,
JAMES RIVER.

SOILING.

It seems that Mr. J. Jenkins, in the neighborhood of Philadelphia, was known to have insti-

tuted some careful experiments upon the subject of soiling, and being called on by a correspondent of the "Farmers' Cabinet," he gives the following as the result of an experiment for three months on twenty-one head of cattle:

"On the whole, it convinced me that 'Vanthace' is right in stating that a piece of grass requisite for pasturing one animal, is by soiling capable of sustaining four, if economy be used in feeding. Although my cattle did not get completely fat in their stands, they appeared to me in general to be more comfortable than afterwards on pasture—always shaded from the hot suns and unannoyed by flies, fed at regular intervals to the full, just room enough between for rumination and digestion; they would testify their satisfaction by chewing the cud, lying on their full stomachs, while the sun beamed or the rains descended without, and by returning mostly from the water-trough direct to their stands without coercion or invitation. I calculated that the manure at one dollar per load paid for the labor of attendance, and as an offset against the prolongation of fattening, if indeed they could have been finished earlier on pasture alone, which the quality of the cattle and their age leads me to doubt, I mowed and put away in my barn at least fifteen tons of good hay more than could have been done had they been all the time on pasture.

"Although convinced of the superior economy of this mode of feeding, I have not ascertained whether cows will milk as well, or beef cattle feed as fast by it, as on pasture—where cattle are to be *kept* rather than *fatted hastily*, I have no doubt of its superiority. J. JENKINS.
West Whiteland, 3d mo. 25th, 1842."

MANUFACTURING MANURE.

Mr. M. G. Bommer has taken out a patent for a process by which fermentation is quickly produced in a mass of vegetable matter. A fortnight is the extent of time required to convert a pile of green vegetable matter into a heap of the very best manure. Mr. Bommer proposes to sell the right of using this process to individual farmers, and publishes several certificates to prove its efficacy. We are not informed, however, of the cost of the process, upon which, we imagine, its utility will be found to depend.

For the Southern Planter.

ROTATION OF CROPS, TOBACCO, RUST.

In the very excellent report of the Powhatan Agricultural Society upon the subject of wheat, I would just offer one reason, and that an ex-

cellent one in my opinion, why we should adopt, when practicable, the five field rotation as therein mentioned, viz: corn, oats, clover, wheat, clover, which is, that that rotation, when properly managed, will supersede the necessity of ever sowing clover seed on the same land more than once. When we take into consideration the expense of buying clover seed, when extensively used, and the trouble of sowing, &c. the above plan, in these hard times, when economy ought and must be the order of the day, should attract some attention. No doubt this consideration had its due weight in the adoption of the system, but its not being mentioned in the report, I am induced to send this little scrip on the subject. I would say that the clover fields should not be grazed except perhaps from the time of hauling in the wheat till winter, and not then, when the land is wet.

The clover should be sufficiently ripe when fallowed for wheat; and when ploughed for corn, the operation should be well performed and the crop cultivated without turning the clover up again. The succeeding spring the land should be ploughed the same depth and the oats raked in and the clover will be thick enough. The decayed vegetable matter thus brought on the surface will be an excellent top dressing for the oats and clover.

Thus much for the wheat. Now a word or two on the tobacco report, which is worthy the attentive consideration of the tobacco grower. "The first operation is the hanging upon sticks—that each plant be placed perpendicularly on them, &c." without mentioning what holds the sticks in a horizontal position. I imagine it was not deemed necessary to enter into particulars so minute. Some few planters have permitted two hands to take hold each end of the stick, and when the plant was cut it was put on by the cutter without its ever touching the ground. One might suppose that some plan of the kind was the one indicated in the report referred to. With plenty of hands and time too, the plan would then be objectionable. But as all saving of time and labor is economy, I think some other plan should be adopted, to the entire exclusion of the above, if any person should now practice it. The carrying it to the scaffolds on the shoulders of the hands is also objectionable, as the most careful hand will bruise it to some extent.

As good a plan as any, is, to let the cutter be followed, when the tobacco becomes sufficiently *wilted*, by others, with sticks in the arms of some one or two little boys, and each stick as needed, stuck into a tobacco hill at an angle of about forty-five degrees, the end in the ground always towards the sun, and the plants carefully put on; the first, next the hill, and so on, in number according to the size of the plants.

The butts pointing towards the sun, the to-

bacco will not be likely to scald. Other hands can be carrying it to the scaffold, which should be convenient. A strong laborer will carry a stick in each hand, holding them sufficiently high—or he can carry four sticks, two on each shoulder, by slipping the tobacco to each end of the stick, being a much greater quantity than could be conveniently carried if not on sticks. This may be thought by many to be a small matter, and so perhaps it is, but as “time is money” it should be expended in small matters as well as great with strict regard to economy. It is important, for the farmer particularly, to strike always at the right time and place, and never, where it can as well be avoided. If the tobacco be put in piles or heaps, and forks or other uprights, for the sticks to rest on, it would take as long to heap it as to put it on the sticks in the way, I mention which can be done with less handling, and of course a saving of labor.

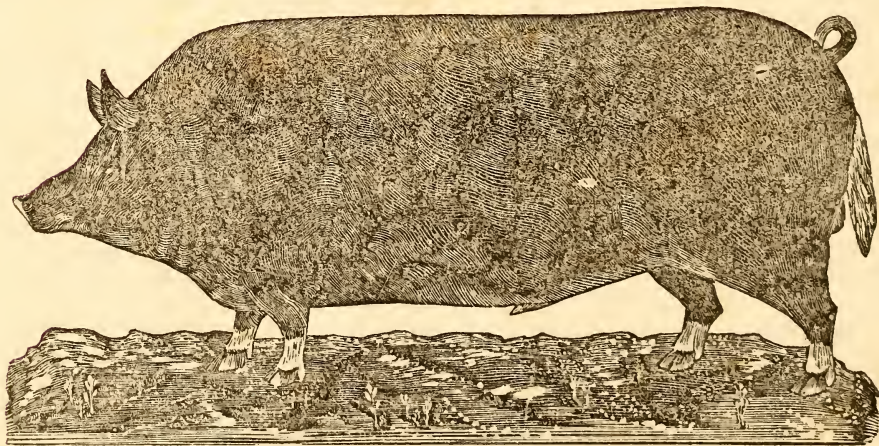
I just wish in my plain farmer-like style to express my preferences in the matters referred to.

I will conclude with a few observations upon the cause of rust in wheat. It is generally supposed, I believe, that warm damp weather, creating a great flow of sap causes the rust. If such weather causes more sap, the same kind of weather gives the grain greater maturative powers. I, therefore, am of opinion that unless this free and abundant flow of sap is suddenly checked by cool weather, we should never see rust on wheat. The cause, I believe, is, therefore, beyond our control,—but as forward wheat is less subject to it than late, we could, to some extent, avoid it by early sowing and on highly improved land, which would cause it to ripen some six or eight days earlier than that sown late and on land not so well improved.

W. W. HANCOCK.

Chesterfield, July 19, 1842.

CHESTERFIELD.



J. B. Gray recently sent to this city to be sold, the splendid boar whose portrait stands at the head of this article—as soon as I heard that there was such a hog here for sale I went to see him, out of mere idle curiosity, believing that I had one at home (Hector, which by the way is a *very fine* animal,) as good as the stranger, I was about to visit; but I was surprised and astonished when I saw him, to observe how infinitely superior he was to any boar of any breed I had ever seen; and determined to have him at any price—and the very lowest I could get named for him, after several days bargaining, was eighty-five dollars. Chesterfield stood, when I bought him at two years old, at the middle of the back 2 feet 9 inches high—measured 4 feet

11½ inches around the heart—and 5 feet 1 inch from behind the ears to the root of the tail—he was bred by John Lossing and sired by the imported boar Reading, (the finest hog ever brought to America,) out of the sow, Superior; from which sow the finest Berkshires in this country have sprung. He is now at my farm, near Manchester, and will be permitted to serve sows for \$5—no charge for board. Reading, the sire of Chesterfield, measured, at three years old, at the middle of the back 2 feet 10½ inches, girth behind the shoulder 5 feet 2½ inches, length from behind the ears to the root of tail 5 feet 1½ inches—he was sold by J. Lossing to Mr. Beach, of Ohio, for \$200 cash—and when carried to the West he served 72 sows at \$10 a piece, the

first season, besides attending to 30 for his owners, and is now acknowledged to be the finest hog in all the West. I promise that at the next fair of the Henrico Agricultural Society, Chesterfield shall out measure Reading; and would take the prize from him were they side by side.

I would engage a few pair of pigs by him out of my two big sows, deliverable this fall if early application be made.

Address L. M. BURFOOT,
Southern Planter,
Richmond, Va.

For the Southern Planter.

FENCING.

Messrs. Editors.—Is there no ground for hope that the law respecting fences may be changed. The present law is exceedingly onerous. I have 650 acres of land which require about six miles of fence five feet high, although I have not half a mile of cross fencing, and I am satisfied that I could save one-fourth of the labor on my plantation beside the destruction, wear and tear of my oxen in frozen weather and the warm weather in spring, and their feed, (which the best farmers will tell you must consist in part of corn,) if I were not obliged to protect my crop against my neighbor's stock as well as my own. This, I assure you, sir, falls very heavily upon the farmer, more especially if he be a laboring man, having no negroes of his own, or if he has to hire a part or all the labor of his plantation.

I will not weary you with my awkward mode of reasoning, but leave it to you, who not only know the evils but know how to tell of them, to urge upon our legislators the necessity of a change, at least in the eastern part of Virginia.

Yours, &c.

M.

We are well aware of the great desire of many of our readers for the passage of a *stock law*. Amongst the most strenuous advocates of a regulation by which every man would be compelled to keep his stock on his own premises, is our respected friend Parson Turner. Great as the advantages would be to many, there is too much open land, which affords fine summer grazing, even in Eastern Virginia, to make such a law by any means desirable to a majority. The few who suffer must, therefore, patiently bear this, as they do many other particular evils, for the sake of the common good, and resign to posterity, the advantages of a denser population.

BARLEY.

Having received no assistance from our correspondents, and being little acquainted with the

subject practically, we looked up our exchange papers and standard agricultural works to enable us to comply with the request of our Loudoun correspondent. We found that the treatises in American papers were hardly more than extracts from Loudoun's Encyclopedia of Agriculture, than which, by the bye, no higher authority is known in this country or in England. We, therefore, give the following condensed summary of what we have met with, taken chiefly from the work just alluded to.

The best soil for barley is a light, rich, loam, finely pulverised. It will not grow well on very sandy or soft soils, or on stiff clays, such as are most suitable for wheat; the ground should be well pulverised by repeated ploughing and harrowing, and if preceded by turnips or peas, (but not by wheat or oats) and the ground well manured for the turnips, so much the better. Manure can seldom be given with advantage to a crop that occupies the ground so short a time as barley, and, therefore, it is generally sown on land which has been enriched for a preceding crop. It delights much in a warm and dry climate. From the middle to the last of April is the best season for sowing, much, however, depending on the state of the season; when the spring opens early and warm, the middle of April is soon enough; if the season is cold and backward, the first of May is sufficiently early. On rich land, in England, two bushels per acre is sown, and more recommended on thin land; but we would always recommend thick seeding on rich land, whilst poor land should be sown more sparingly; the practice of the best farmers in Virginia bears us out in this opinion. Brown recommends that the seeds be steeped from 18 to 24 hours in pure water, previous to sowing; allowance being made at the time of sowing for the swelling of the grain in the steep. In England, it is sometimes sown in drills, and ploughed and hoed, but we would not advise this method of cultivation in this country. The crop is ripe and ready for the cradle when the Red Roan, as the farmers term it, meaning a reddish color on the ear, is gone off, or when the ears droop and fall, as it were, double against the straw, and the stalks have lost their verdure.

In harvesting barley more care is requisite than in any grain crops, even in the best of seasons; and in wet seasons, it is found extremely difficult to save it.

Owing to the brittleness of the straw, after it

has reached a certain period, it must be cut down, as, when it is suffered to stand longer, much loss is sustained by the breaking off of the heads; on that account, it is cut at a time when the grain is soft, and the straw retains a great proportion of its natural juices, and consequently, requires a long time in the field, before either the grain is hardened, or the straw sufficiently dry; when put into the stack sooner, it is apt to heat, and much loss is sustained. The general product is from twenty to thirty bushels in England, and in some cases, as many as seventy-five bushels per acre have been obtained. The straw is of little value, being used only as litter. Smut is the only disease to which the crop seems to be liable.

For the Southern Planter.

CALIFORNIA WHEAT.

Goochland, July, 1842.

Messrs. Editors,—I have of late seen many notices of the California wheat (*Triticum Compositum*) in the Enquirer and other political papers, in all of which it is spoken of most favorably, but especially does the Editor of the Enquirer give it his commendation, speaking of it as likely to produce the greatest improvement in the state of our agriculture that has been brought about for many years. Now, gentlemen, lest these laudatory notices, so well calculated to humbug the people generally, should induce farmers to buy this wheat with a view of sowing a part of their land in it, I will, through your most valuable periodical, make public an experiment which I have recently made with this *California wheat*.

Being fond of making experiments with different kinds of grain and plants for my own benefit and amusement, I last fall procured a few heads of this wheat and sowed it in drills upon a piece of land that is quite rich; the grains sown were small, shrivelled, and indifferent, but came up well, and grew off prettily. They headed rather later than other wheat sown about the same time, and were consequently just in the way of the rust, which, however, did not injure the appearance of the straw as much as is generally the case in such a spell of weather as the wheat has this year been subjected to. The straw is short and would not be sufficiently large to sustain the weight of the head, if it were well filled, which, however, is not the case, for the grain is short, chaffy, shrivelled, and possessed of but little farinaceous matter. The result of my experiment has fully convinced me of the utter worthlessness of this wheat, in this country, whatever may be its value in a warmer and more genial climate.

That you may satisfy yourselves of the correctness of my conclusions, I will, by the first opportunity that offers, send you a few heads, splendid indeed in their external appearance, but having their inside hollow and full of emptiness. By examining them, you must with me arrive at the conclusion that it is entirely vain ever to hope for any good results from a grain so perfectly indifferent as that of the California wheat.

WHEATON.

For the Southern Planter.

Charlottesville, Ju'y 13, 1842.

Messrs. Editors,—Your June number, page 129, contains an extract from an address delivered before the Pee Dee Agricultural Society of South Carolina, showing the immense advantage of turning in green crops. It is there stated "that the land manured by turning in a crop of peas, (cow peas) yielded fifteen bushels of wheat to the acre; whilst that on which nothing but the natural growth of weeds and grass had been turned in with the seed, yielded only *one* bushel." Now, Messrs. Editors, can it be believed that a crop of peas could produce such a state of fertility as the above and more farmers not know it? especially, as many are willing to give a dollar a load for manure. I observed last year in passing through Goochland, that Mr. Sampson had a field sown down in peas, I suppose, for the purpose of turning in as manure. I should think it would be very acceptable to your readers generally if he, or any other person, could give us some information on which we could certainly calculate as where and at what price the pea can be bought, when it is sown, and how many to an acre.

I hope you will not let this subject rest until there be elicited enough to satisfy every mind that green crops are the shortest and surest way of improving our poor lands. Can any of your readers give us their experience as to the fertilizing qualities of buckwheat? I understand it is extensively used in Rockingham as a preparation for wheat.

J. FIFE.

We think with our correspondent that the subject of turning in green crops is entitled to the fullest consideration, and we shall be much pleased to see it amply discussed.

AGRICULTURAL CHEMISTRY.

Messrs. J. W. Randolph & Co. have laid upon our table a little work, entitled "A Popular Treatise on Agricultural Chemistry for the Use of the Practical Farmer." The author, Mr. Chas. Squarey, an Englishman, without pretending to any discoveries of his own, has attempted to

free, as far as possible, from technical terms the received theories of Liebig and others upon the chemical action of agricultural agents. That many of these theories, concocted by the philosopher in his closet, are destined to fall before the superior knowledge of the *practical* farmer, we do not doubt. The philosopher must exchange his laboratory for the open field, with all its varieties of chemical agents, subject to all the influences of the various revolutions of the season, before he can *with certainty* establish a system for regulating the growth of plants in the open air. Still something has been, and more will yet be effected, by the labors of mighty minds devoted to scientific pursuits, and if they have not attained all that a generous zeal in the cause to which they are devoted, induces them to flatter themselves with having obtained, they have probably arrived at many important conclusions, that the observations of practical men will hereafter confirm. At any rate, their pretensions are of such a character as to make a knowledge of their theories deeply interesting to every individual who has an opportunity of testing them; nowhere can the man without a knowledge of technical terms obtain this information so well as from the work of Mr. Squarrey; and if in the endeavor to use language intelligible to all, he has been less full and explicit to the initiated, the difficulty rests rather in the nature of his task than in any want of skill in the execution. We would recommend this little work, the price of which is only seventy-five cents, to the consideration of every farmer in America.

For the Southern Planter.

BRIERS.

Messrs. Editors,—In the July number of the Southern Planter is published a letter from Wm. Massie, Esq. of Nelson county, in which he asks for information in regard to the destruction of briers. The following plan I have found to succeed: Mow and grub a field in the month of August, cultivate it in corn the next year—graze it until the succeeding summer, then fallow and sow it in wheat—after which use it as a pasture for sheep and cattle. This system if persevered in and applied to all the fields in rotation will clean and improve the land, prepare it for clover, and cause it to produce more abundant crops of grain.

As you have published much about the hog, its various species, nature and qualities, permit me to state a fact (probably not generally known) that *different breeds of hogs will not amalgamate*.

I have known a sow of our common stock to have pigs by an improved boar, some of which partook of the nature of the father and others of the mother, as different in appearance and size as were the boar and sow, and none showed a *mixture of blood*. Cases of the kind I have frequently observed; such may not always be the result of crossing, yet I believe farmers should have but one sort, and that the best, which is generally admitted to be the Berkshire.

FAUQUIER.

July 18, 1842.

RURAL REPOSITORY.

We have received a beautiful little sheet with the above title, printed at Hudson, N. Y. at fifty cents per annum, with a request that we would notice and exchange—with the last we promptly and gladly complied; but we have hitherto forborne, as a general rule, any particular notice of our exchanges, although many of them were entitled to such compliment at our hands, on more accounts than one. But where it was invidious to make distinctions, where delicacy forbade our being cauid, we determined to be silent. Our extracts are the best test of our estimate of the merits of our cotemporaries. This, however, we promise, when we meet with an agricultural paper, that is not worth ten times the price of subscription, we will notice it.

ASPARAGUS.

From the British Gardener's Chronicle, it appears, that this vegetable obtains a size and flavor in the north of Spain unknown to any other part of the world. The Editor asserts that there is only one variety of the plant, and that the difference in individuals is entirely owing to the difference in cultivation. In country gardens, he says, it is small, green, and strong—in the London market it is long, white, hard, and tough—to the eye attractive enough, but to the taste more like bleached timber than an esculent. Indeed, we have never been able to comprehend why, in this our age of improvement, some ingenious turner has not produced imitation sticks, which might be tipped with half an inch of eatable asparagus, and thus spare the necessity of cooking four-fifths of the stuff that is brought to a London table.

Captain Churchill, of the Royal Marines, spent some time at Guipuscoa, particularly remarkable for the flavor of its asparagus, which measures from three to six inches in circumfer-

ence: the following he states as the mode of cultivation by which this degree of perfection is obtained:

"Asparagus is a plant found naturally on the beach of various parts of the coast of Europe, where it is covered by the drifting sand, and watered by salt water at high tides. Sand and salt water occasionally may, therefore, be regarded as indispensable conditions for maintaining it in health. How seldom is this thought of! It, however, explains in part the excellence of St. Sebastian asparagus.

"It seems that at the mouth of the Urumea is a narrow slip of land, about three feet above high-water mark, consisting of alluvial soil and the wearing away of sandstone hills, at whose foot it is placed. This is the asparagus ground of St. Sebastian. Beds are formed five feet wide, without any previous preparation except digging and raking. In March the seed is sown in two drills, about two inches deep, and eighteen inches from the alleys, thus leaving a space of two feet between the drills. The rows run invariably east and west—doubtless in order that the plants may shade the ground during the heats of summer. When the seedlings are about six inches high, they are thinned to something more than a foot apart. Water is conducted once a day among the alleys and over the beds, so as to give the seedling an abundant and constant supply of fluid during the season of their growth. This is the cultivation during the first year.

"The second year, in the month of March, the beds are covered with three or four inches of fresh night-soil from the reservoirs of the town; it remains on them during the succeeding autumn; the operation of irrigation being continued as during the first season. This excessive stimulus, and the abundant room the plants have to grow in, must necessarily make them extremely vigorous, and prepare them for the production of gigantic sprouts.

"In the third spring, the asparagus is fit to cut. Doubtless all its energies are developed by the digging in of the manure in the autumn of the second year; and when it does begin to sprout, it finds its roots in contact with a soil of inexhaustible fertility. Previously, however, to the cutting, each bed is covered in the course of March very lightly with dead leaves, to the depth of about eight inches; and the cutting does not commence till the plants peep through this covering, when it is carefully removed from the stems, in order that the finest only may be cut, which are rendered white by their leafy covering, and succulent by the excessive richness of the soil.

"In the autumn of the third year, after the first cutting, the leaves are removed, and the beds again dressed with fresh night-soil as be-

fore; and these operations are repeated year after year. In addition to this, the beds are half under salt water annually at spring tides.

"Let any one compare the mode of culture with ours, and there will be no room for wondering at the difference in the result. The Spaniards use a light sandy soil; we are content with any thing short of clay. They irrigate; we trust to our rainy climate. They know the value of salt water to a sea coast plant; we take no means to imitate nature in this respect. They dress their beds with the most powerful of all manures; we are contented with the black residuum of a cucumber frame, which is comparatively a *caput mortuum*. Finally, they throw leaves lightly over their beds, by which means they expose the young sprouts to the least amount of resistance, and force them onward by the warmth collected from the sun by such beds of leaves; we, on the other hand, compel the asparagus to struggle through solid earth, capable in the smallest possible degree of absorbing warmth during the day—but, on the other hand, ready to part with its heat again at night to the greatest possible amount.

"Can any one wonder, then, at the poor results obtained by our manner of cultivation?—or that some gardener should now and then astonish his neighbors by producing asparagus which we call giant, but which at St. Sebastian would be called second rate?"

To the market gardener asparagus is probably the most profitable vegetable he raises, and he may well afford to incur a little additional pains or expense, which will enable him to bring a superior article into the market.

POTATOES.

Potatoes require a loamy soil; one abounding in vegetable matter, and moist rather than dry. Gen. Barnum, who has raised greater crops of potatoes than perhaps any other man in the United States, attributes much of his success to his not disturbing the plants in hilling after the rootlets for the tubers begin to form; his method of performing that operation being to bring rich earth in a horse cart, the wheels of which pass between the rows, and from this dropping a shovel full upon each hill. This furnishes a bed of rich fresh earth for the tubers, and avoids all interference with the roots.

MEANS OF RENEWING POOR LANDS.

It is a well established fact, that any lot of poor land may be enriched to almost any extent by planting it from year to year with sweet potatoes and turning in the whole crop of vines every autumn. Let our planters try the experi-

ment and satisfy themselves. Select a piece of your old fields and be willing to incur the trivial expense of seed and planting. How soon can you reclaim all your old pine fields which now make such an unsightly appearance among our best plantations.—*Warren (N. C.) Reporter.*

The readers of the first volume of the Planter will remember the extraordinary fertilizing properties attributed to potato vines by Mr. Joseph Bernard; several individuals of the greatest respectability have since that time confirmed his views to the fullest extent.

The following is a good thing. Every unsaleable article of vegetable growth should be carefully collected, and made to minister to the growth of that which affords nutriment to man or beast. We should prefer using it though as a cover, first, instead of turning it in at once.

GREEN CROPS FOR TURNING DOWN.

We hear much of sowing crops for the purpose of ploughing them down while green. Did it ever occur to the minds of our farmers how many and what heavy "green crops" may be

cut from their rushy bottoms, their ditches, their wood; but above all, from the margins of their rivers and creeks; and which, if buried in the bottom of their furrows, would ferment and become as valuable manure as any that could be grown for the purpose at the expense of ploughing and sowing, and which would enable them to mow these for their cattle, and thus obtain from them an addition to their cattle keep, instead of robbing them of so many acres of fodder? There is upon record an account of an experiment on growing potatoes, where it was found that a single cabbage-leaf laid on every set of the potatoes while planting, produced as large a crop as was taken from the rows dressed with stable manure. Then what would be the result of a thick covering of water-lilies, reeds, or the rushes and weeds from our boggy bottoms?

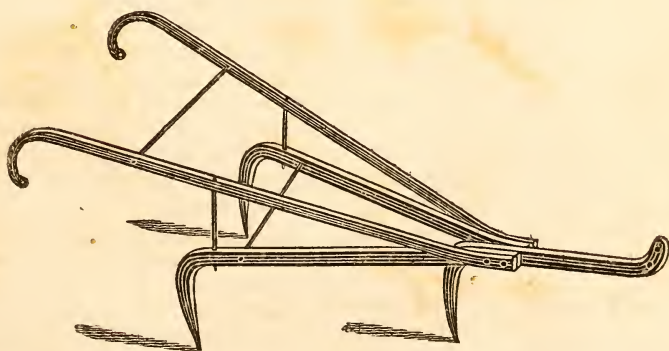
Exchange paper.

RECIPE TO CORN BEEF.

Put into a cask twelve quarts of salt, twelve gallons of water, and one pound of saltpetre: stir it until all is dissolved—salt your meat well in a separate tub, let it stand ten days, then put it in the brine with a large stone on it to keep it under. The brine will keep three or four months.

For the Southern Planter.

WROUGHT IRON RAKE.



Messrs. Editors,—Several of us in this county and the adjoining ones, have in use a three-tooth iron rake with which we are pleased. By whom invented I know not, but believe a Mr. Marshall, of Amelia, is entitled to that honor. I have used no other for nine years and am better pleased with them in 1842 than I was in 1833. I will attempt to give you an idea of them, and if I succeed, you and I together may impart the

same to others. Bar iron $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches square is the size. Of this cut three pieces, each 3 feet long. The smith will then form a tooth of one end of each piece, just as common rake teeth are formed, and bend them down 14 inches long—he will raise the other end of one of the pieces a little like the beam of a wooden rake and punch the hole for the clavis. This piece constitutes the beam and front tooth. The ends of the other

two pieces he will form into the shape of a wedge, and inclining the one to the left and the other to the right, will fit them to the sides of the beam. These give you the side pieces and back teeth, and must be fastened to the beam with two screws and taps, one of which will likewise pass through and confine the lower ends of the handles. The back teeth should be 14 inches apart. The handles must be made of good timber, and will be supported by two rods of iron a half inch in diameter, fastened to the side pieces. The rake when completed weighs about fifty pounds, and is "the very best article" that I have met with for working corn and getting in small grain. Its *durability* and the *difficulty of breaking it* are matters worthy of *some* consideration.

The beam and front tooth with the side pieces and back teeth are to be tapered and inclined from an inch back of the holes, the one to the right and the other to the left. The angle of inclination will be determined by the distance required between the back teeth, and may be made greater or less by a blow of the sledge hammer.

The engraving represents the entire rake, wanting nothing but a good ploughman, a good horse, rich land, and a propitious season, to make a good crop.

Your friend, PH. B. WHITE.

Nottoway, July, 1842.

From the Farmers' Cabinet.

SHOEING THE HORSE.

Mr. Editor,—The remark of your correspondent at page 318 of your number for May, "That many of us transpose the order of our labors," reminds me of a mode adopted in the shoeing of the horse, which I once witnessed, and which is, I believe, of importance sufficient to deserve notice in the pages of your valuable and very interesting work. It occurred at the town of Croydon, near London, which is known as the centre of the stag hunt, so well attended by the whole country around, and especially by the high-bred bloods of London: and where may be seen a field of the best horses in the whole world—many of them worth their five or seven thousand dollars.

As I once passed through this town, one of my horses' shoes became loose, and I went to the shop of a smith named Lovelace, to get it fastened; the shoe was nearly new, and had become loose in consequence of the nails having drawn out of the hoof, although they had been clinched in the manner universally practised. The smith remarked that all the other shoes were loose, and would soon drop off, when I requested him to take them off and replace them; and then did I perceive the different mode which he adopted for fixing them,

which I will here detail. As fast as he drove the nails, he merely bent the points down to the hoof, without, as is customary, twisting them off with the pincers; these he then *drove home*, clinching them against a heavy pair of pincers, which were not made very sharp; and after this had been very carefully done, he twisted off each nail as close as possible to the hoof; the pincers being dull, the nail would hold, so as to get a perfect *twist round* before it separated. These twists were then beaten close into the hoof and filed smooth, but not deep, or with the view to rasp off the twist of the nail. "Oh ho!" said I, "I have learnt a lesson in horse-shoeing." "Yes," said he, "and a valuable one; if I were ever to lose a single shoe in a long day's hunt, I should have to shut up my shop; my business is to shoe the horses belonging to the hunt, and the loss of a shoe would be the probable ruin of a horse worth, perhaps, a thousand pounds; but I never am fearful of such an accident." "Simply, because you drive home and clinch the nails before you twist them off," said I—"Yes," replied he, "by which I secure a *rivet*, as well as a *clinch*." The thing was as clear as the light of day, and I have several times endeavored to make our shoeing-smiths understand it, but they cannot see the advantage it would be to *themselves*, and guess, therefore, *it would never do in these parts*; but if my brother farmers cannot see how it works with half an eye, and have not the resolution to get it put into practice, they ought to see the shoes drop from the feet of their horses daily, as I was once accustomed to do. Now, let any one take up an old horse-shoe at at any of the smiths' shops on the road, and examine the clinch of the nails which have drawn out of the hoof, and he will soon perceive how the thing operates. In short, if the nails are driven home before twisting off, and the *rivet* formed by the *twist* be not afterwards removed by the rasp, I should be glad to be told how the shoe is to come off at all, unless by first cutting out the twist. I am, sir, a constant reader of the Cabinet, and one who has benefitted many dollars by the various hints which have been given in its pages.

J. S.

Amongst which, perhaps, no one has appeared of more value to our practical readers than that here presented. Will our correspondent accept thanks for his very interesting "hint," which is given in the true spirit of reciprocity.—Ed.

The readers of the first volume of the Planter will remember that the same valuable hint is given, in effect, in the communication of our correspondent H. T. as is here afforded upon the more imposing authority of the smith of the Croydon hunt, in England. The article is worthy the attention of every man who rides or drives a horse.

THE DOLLAR FARMER.

We have just received the first number of a neatly printed sheet, issued from the office of the Louisville Journal, called the *DOLLAR FARMER*. We have not had time to inspect the contents, but will take the responsibility of recommending it upon the faith we have in its celebrated Editor. Mr. Prentice's judgment is not inferior to his wit, and we know no information more valuable to the farmer of the South than that we have been accustomed to find under the agricultural head of the Louisville Weekly Journal.

The Farmer consists of sixteen quarto pages, and is published monthly at one dollar per annum.

BULL FOR SALE.

We have for sale a very fine young bull of the Holstein and Alderney breed. He is two and a half years old, and probably of the finest *milking* stock in America. He was bred within a few miles of the city, and is, therefore, thoroughly acclimated. The owner having no further use for him, a great bargain may be had, if early application is made (post paid) to the Editors of the Planter.

For the Southern Planter.

Having been absent from the first until the 16th of this month, your July number containing the proposal of Col. L. M. Burfoot, dated 28th April, has just come to my hands.

At this time I have no pigs, and expect none (except some litters of Berkshires in October) until March. I will then submit to the test proposed by Col. B.—a pair of Mr. Dicken's white hogs, either to be fed in the way proposed, or to be turned out upon the ordinary farm keep; at the expiration of the stipulated time, both pair to be the property of him whose pigs shall weigh most. Or, as I am not prepared for styefeeding and have no time to attend to it, I will deliver to Col. B. himself, a pair to be fed with his own by him. I know that the experiment would be fairly and impartially made, and believe from his greater experience it would be more reliable than if made where less care, and accuracy as to the food consumed, was observed.

In these days of puffs and portraits, Col. Burfoot might well have availed himself of so fair an opportunity to say something more of his own stock of Berkshires, particularly of the very superior male lately purchased by him at a high price, and to give your readers a history of his "birth, parentage and education." This being the finest hog of any breed that I have ever seen, I think a part of your columns could not be better occupied than by a full account, with

an engraving. It would be an advantage to breeders to know something of him, and for one, I should be very glad to see it.*

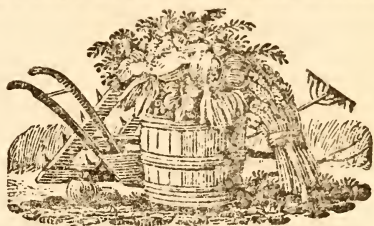
Respectfully yours,

WM. H. RICHARDSON.

* The above was received just as our last form was preparing for the press. Gen. Richardson will be pleased to see that his wish has been anticipated in the fine engraving of the splendid boar, *CHESTERFIELD*, which, at the request of several others, we have obtained for this number of the Planter.

We have had no opportunity of communicating with Col. Burfoot since the receipt of Gen. Richardson's note, but will take the responsibility of promising him an answer from our friend in our next.

C. T. B.



COMMUNICATIONS.

We have, over and over again, declared our convictions that a mine of exhaustless agricultural information lay hidden in the breasts of the farmers of Virginia. The variety of original and valuable matter furnished by correspondents in our last and present numbers, goes far to justify the assertion; all we ask is, that our friends will not relax in their exertions to render the Planter, what we know they are capable of making it, one of the most popular vehicles of practical agricultural information to be found in the Union. It must be apparent to all, that on the original communications of practical farmers the chief merit of such a work as ours must mainly depend. It cannot be expected of us, however great our zeal, however earnestly we strive to increase our practical knowledge of the art, that, unassisted and alone, we can give to our readers the best and most practical advice on all the different branches of business appertaining to the varied, and ever changing, but still delightful, profession of the husbandman. We believe there is no one who has devoted himself diligently to the practice of farming, that has not made some observation that would be new, interesting, and beneficial to thousands of others. It is the want of this free interchange of mutual observations, this facility of swapping ideas, that has so much retarded the progress of agriculture; and it was to afford an additional

facility to the South, at a cheap rate, for this mutual intercommunication, that the Planter was established. Without aid or encouragement, indeed contrary to the advice of many, we commenced this work; by dint of perseverance and industry, we have succeeded notwithstanding the obstacles of the "times," in establishing the pecuniary profits of the paper upon a footing, at least, to secure its permanency, and we have enlisted in its favor, and brought to its aid, as our readers will perceive, some of the ablest farmers and clearest writers in Virginia: but we would have every subscriber a correspondent—why not? a generous mind loves not to receive without making a return: when a subscriber sends us a dollar he pays us well and fairly for our labor, but it still leaves him largely indebted to those friends, who generously devote much of their time to give to others the benefit of their experience—let no man say I have nothing to tell—I cannot write—all we ask is a plain, unvarnished statement of facts—let others, in return for what they afford you, have the benefit of your observations; for any ornaments of style that you may think needful, draw upon us at pleasure; we feel fully competent to supply all that are required by the pure and simple taste of our agricultural readers. We say then to one and all, observe closely, watch narrowly, and report freely to the Planter, which has already a more extended circulation than any other agricultural paper in Virginia. To this we trust to make our paper a source of delight and amusement to its readers, and to prove to the world, that our dear old native State, calumniated as she is, stands unrivalled in the knowledge and the practice too of the noble art of agriculture.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We thank Dr. H., of P. G., to whom we are under more than one obligation, for his interesting communication; it will appear in our next. He must not be surprised, however, to find us exercising our ruthless and despotic power in razeing and condensing the article, to suit the peculiar character of our work.

Various other communications have been received, which we have not yet had time to examine, but which shall be treated with attention, and for which we feel ourselves indebted to the writers, even should they prove unavailable to us.

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